

THE MEDIA: AN INFLUENCE ON U.S. FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICY BY ANY OTHER MEANS

**A MONOGRAPH
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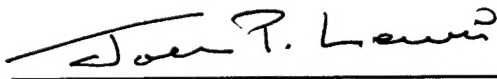
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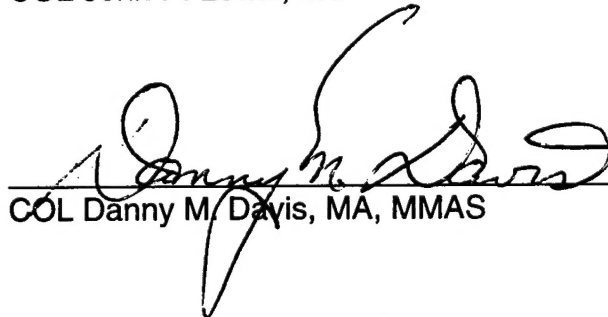
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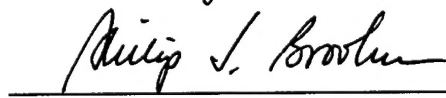
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ABSTRACT

The Media: An Influence on U.S. Foreign and Military Policy By Any Other Means, by MAJ Michael A. Scully, USA, 52 pages.

Advancements in communications and technology have served as a nurturing womb for the birth and subsequent growth of the modern media. Although fledgling in comparison to the environment in which it exists, this being is exerting significant influence on a powerful and patriarchal institution: the U.S. Government. This institution, itself born out of revolution and a quest for liberty and freedom, has traditionally formulated and executed policy with relative independence of action, answering primarily and often exclusively to the people it governs. The people, accepting an attenuated level of knowledge and understanding about governmental and global affairs, assumed a role in the activities of government by using the power of the democratic vote to shape and focus the direction of policy. With faith and confidence in the institution, the people obediently answered the government's call time after time, often meaning enduring the sacrifice of sending sons and daughters onto foreign battlefields.

However, as the modern media grew and matured, it too assumed an unforeseen role. This role was one of educating the people and the world to events occurring within the global environment, events often initiated or guided by government policy. Moreover, the media became a critical influence in the development of policy, both foreign and domestic, as government and military leaders sought to balance the consequence of action with the potential retribution of an educated public that demanded answers to questions as quickly as the real-time media coverage delivering the news to their homes. Such coverage led the public to question traditional faith and confidence in government, and in some cases resulted in the media becoming the recipient of this honor. This coverage, and apparent influence, also may lead today's military leaders to ask whether or not a new approach is needed to assessing and focusing on the media. Such is the power of the media, and its potential for defining success or failure of military operations seems endless. It continues to grow, feeding on an expansion of communications technology that exposes virtually every action of government, and every perceived contradiction to the desires and mandates of the people.

A study of the media and its influence on foreign and military policy is thus a study in the many faces of the media, and the means it employs to shape an often precarious union between the policymakers and the people. This study will examine the media from such a perspective, focusing on the ways and means the media uses to directly and indirectly influence policy. Accepting that foreign policy often requires employment of the military arm, this paper will propose potential outcomes for media presence, intentional or unintentional, that may have positive as well as negative implications for the future of the military. Recent history can serve as a starting point for analysis of this issue, understanding that the media is itself not static but dynamic, and as adaptive as the government, people, and military to sustaining growth in the years ahead.

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I. INTRODUCTION

"In general, those who aim to kill the messengers shoot themselves in the feet. But more and more revisionism is at work, and the truth, if not dead, is at the very least missing in action."¹ Seeking the truth, or at least what one may perceive as truth, often becomes a process of finding sources that can reveal information critical to making decisions that ultimately influence how people live, work, and interact.

In few places is this concept more important than in a nation espousing democratic ideals such as those existing in the United States. However, the structure of today's democracy, and associated diplomacy in the global sphere, is taking on new dimensions influenced by an environment of rapidly expanding information networks. These networks provide the United States and other countries with new ways to communicate between one another during both peace and war. One of the relatively new elements in the diplomatic information exchange is the role of the media, particularly television. This "media diplomacy", both official and unofficial, has been facilitated by an apparent revolution taking place in the field of telecommunications.

Given the realities of this media diplomacy and the influence of the media, important questions arise that deserve the attention of both national and military leaders. Can the media, in their evolving capacity, in fact prolong, curtail and define the success or failure of military operations? And, If the media's position in today's political and military structure can significantly influence not only foreign and domestic policy but the outcome of military operations, do military leaders need to consider a new approach to assessing and focusing the media? Such an approach may have advantages and disadvantages, but is worthy of analysis

given a thorough understanding of what exactly the media's role is in today's world.

Traditionally, the military generally recognizes an official type of media diplomacy that allowed for a flow of information directed through the official channels of government, such as the State Department. This process relays information on a wide variety of topics, ranging from military intervention to humanitarian efforts worldwide. But, an unofficial media diplomacy also exists, one that includes the news media and any other actors who are able to inform others via the growing global information network.

In this context, the news media has not changed the importance of diplomacy, only the methods by which it is conducted and the scope of its impact.² The media has apparently become an entity unto itself, operating in alternating parallel and hierarchical structure to provide information on actions occurring in both government and society.

But, the media appears to assume a greater role than simply providing information to a democratic system. It now may influence development of policy within the democratic framework. "The rise of television news to its dominant position as an influence on the politics of foreign policy can be traced to technology, economics, public reliance on television as a news source and a set of international concerns. All help to explain the new circumstances facing policymakers, the press and the public."³ Regardless of the responsibility within society, one cannot operate without considering both the presence and influence instantaneous information has and will have on the shaping of decisions and policy.

For example, real time Cable News Network (CNN) footage of events in Haiti both prior to and following execution of military intervention during Operation Uphold Democracy forced military planners to, at a minimum, consider the impact

such coverage would have on military planning and decisions within the theater. How such events as riots in the streets of Haiti would be received and perceived by both the population and national leaders of the U.S. could realistically be a factor in the development of military action.⁴ But, such broadcasts could also be used as an intelligence tool to monitor the volatile environment of a given location.

As such, it is important for military leaders and planners to recognize the influence, and potential cause-and-effect, the media will have both in planning and execution of successful military campaigns. The media now possesses both ways and means which they use to influence foreign policy. The military often is called upon to implement foreign policy, and is faced with a reality that the media has the potential to significantly influence the success of military operations both intentionally and unintentionally. Thus, there exists a need for military planners to have the means to properly plan for the media, and its potential impact on any given military operation.

One should recognize that the media perceives a real, tangible need to provide information to a public that seeks to know circumstances surrounding events. Likewise, the military may in fact have a need to ensure that the public receives specific information on events, especially when receipt of such information may actually enhance operational planning or execution in non-traditional military environments. Therefore, the military should recognize the potential for a symbiosis that can be established for mutual cooperation between the military and the media.

With or without such cooperation, though, the media may still have their story. The tools of the media, the cables and wires and lenses and modems, become powerful instruments in the hands of individuals who's job it is not to record

failure, but take what comes.⁵ Military planners can and should work to see that these instruments enhance, not detract, from military needs.

Thus, solely planning explanations of policies and actions using the guidelines for persuasive and credible news frames is no longer enough. As experienced in recent military operations such as Desert Storm, events documented in such media processes as CNN do not unfold as monologues, but in dialogues, with allies, neutrals, and opponents. Preparing for CNN coverage requires a readiness to "hear and respond to the voices and images of others, shaping messages into cogent harmony with perceptions of these dialogues."⁶

With such a growing influence of the media, governments and subsequently their military arm seem to have become progressively more sensitive to press attempts to explore issues while they are still in process of making up their own minds. Yet, this may be the key stage at which public opinion can have any genuine part in decision making.⁷ The struggle of the government's need for secrecy, especially in the military arena, versus the public's right to know and the press's duty to find out and tell is unending. It raises fundamental questions about government-press relations in a time of international peril.⁸ To political and military leaders the press has become at one and the same time and to a degree much greater than ever before something to be "guarded against and something to be courted; guarded against for fear it finds out too much, courted for fear it doesn't give good publicity."⁹

This trend is significant and compounding when realizing an apparent presence of a remarkable apathy in the United States about the growing inclination of governments to "manage the news". On occasion, the press itself has shown a readiness to succumb to governmental authority, a trend that would probably have shocked American editors of half a century ago. Yet, without free,

independent and efficient newspapers the public right to know what its rulers are up to, which is at the heart of the democratic system, stands to be thwarted .¹⁰

These many roles and influences of the media provide a framework for study in tolerance of and compromise with the media in a complex, changing global environment. The many "faces" of the media, its role in shaping policy, and its influence on diplomacy is worthy of analysis and assessment as officials throughout the government and the military adapt to the growing information spectrum.

A comprehensive look at the media system and its ability to influence success in military campaigns may reveal that a new approach toward the media is called for by military leaders and planners. If a new paradigm is in order, verified by an analysis of media impact on military operations, then now is the time to negotiate and plan for the media, and actually incorporate the media into military operations.

II. ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN TODAY'S SOCIETY?

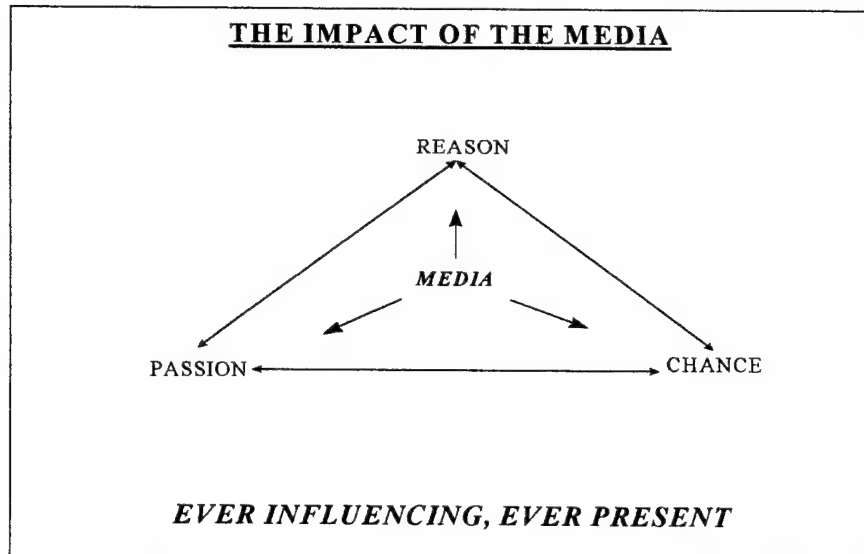


FIGURE 1, THE IMPACT OF THE MEDIA

For years historians and political scientists have discussed in numerous writings the intricate cause-and-effect relationship that exists between a government, its military and the population of the nation. Clausewitz, in his book *On War*, defined this relationship as a balance between the passion of the people, the reason of government, and the chance of the military (Figure 1).¹¹ Through this balance, a nation can theoretically enact and ascribe policy that serves the interests of the nation as a whole. Given what we have examined thus far, there appears to be an increasing cause-and-effect potential for the media and its related role in society.

Over the years, as technology evolved and society became more complex, government's ability to inform and present policy became a significant challenge. In difficult and volatile issues affecting a nation, the need to create a forum for discussion and decision assumed a greater priority among leaders of the society. In the planning for war, arguably the most potentially traumatic activity in which a

society can engage, the ultimate decisions on the conduct of war rests with the people. Thus, democratic governments have a need to provide a means to inform the people with the facts necessary for significant national decisions. From this need, a free and independent media evolved, protected by constitutional guarantees, that assured the people of access to the needed sources of information.¹²

This news media, like the armed services of a government, evolved into various branches--wire services, newspapers, news magazines, radio, television--each with its own incentives and practices. Journalists developed a public theology: the press seeks out the facts, providing the truth so that serious citizens may decide. In the eyes of some analysts, it even served as a kind of fourth branch of government. In peacetime, the people viewed a free and vigorous press as a means of keeping democracy vigorous.¹³

The public learned to rely on the newspapers, radio and television for accurate information and up-to-the-minute news. As society grew more complex and less homogeneous so the media assumed an increasing educational role. As a result, the public used the media more and more to improve their knowledge of topics on which they were unable to acquire first-hand information, and they depended upon the professionalism of the journalists for accurate information and informed comment.¹⁴ In this environment, the press assumed three linked responsibilities: collect and publish news, interpret and comment on it, and to act as a guard dog of the public interest in areas of public concern where executive or governmental power may be arbitrarily used.¹⁵

In fact, as presented in Figure 1, a modified version of the Clausewitzian Trinity places the media in a prominent and direct role in society, one that both informs and influences the operations and reactions of the government, military and people. In one striking example, the political and psychological

consequences of CNN images of Patriot and Scud missiles flying in the night skies during Desert Storm provided a fascinating example of the linkage between presidential action to perceived crisis, military operational art, and human drama unfolding.¹⁶

Government and military leaders soon became aware of the implications of the speed of modern communications which can transmit television pictures via satellite from the battlefield to a mass audience more quickly than information can be passed over the military communications net.¹⁷ The resultant need to keep future populations in touch with changing attitudes in the Services, with the rapid developments in government and military technology, and abreast of defense strategic thinking actually evolved into an educational requirement.¹⁸

Yet, this new-founded role of the media within society created different and unforeseen problems and challenges. The military soon pointed out their belief that a democracy in wartime can survive without a First Amendment, but it cannot survive without a successful military defense.¹⁹ As the link between government, military, and the people became further established via the media, the vast majority of those working in newspapers, radio or television found themselves wholly ignorant about the military and its intricacies.²⁰

Political groups began to "capture" images that served their purposes and reused them, creating new events to be televised. News media competed to broadcast dramatic events, which were then repeated and echoed from one news channel to others, until supplanted by newer images. Consequently, the media emphasized event coverage, exclusiveness, and distribution of images rather than the quality, nuance, substance, and interpretation of news content.²¹

Newspapers, as a commercial business, demonstrated objectives entirely different from those of other institutions. As such, people who relied solely on newspapers for their news often found themselves being exposed to a slanted

view of events which were often blatant in the editorials and feature articles, and usually more subtle in terms of news selection.²² Yet, newspapers are arguably "unique barometers" of their age. They indicate more plainly than anything else the climate of the societies to which they belong, not only because they are a source of news, but because it reflects in what it prints the extent to which authority at every level is prepared to disclose its purpose or can be bullied into revealing its intent.²³

But, any attempt to diminish the value of radio and television as important news mediums would be short-sighted. They reach many people who do not read newspapers or who only glance at them superficially, and if they do not go very deep at least they help great audiences to stay informed about world events and gain a perspective on those events. Access to the news is an essential part of the freedom of the press and the radio and television have greatly extended and undoubtedly had a large part in shaping political attitudes from time to time.²⁴

In addition to traditional media, the Internet has become a significant and extraordinarily fluid medium, literally changing by the minute. New sites appear at a breathtaking rate—one of the major on-line Internet catalogs receives 22,000 new listings every day. Because it only takes a few minutes at a computer to change a site, they change regularly. This process lends itself to up-to-the-minute information on breaking news events worldwide and issues worthy of discussion. A massive amount of new information is available to the researcher, albeit at the sacrifice of available older information. The Internet is less like a library where the holdings remain relatively constant than a public bulletin board whose information has a brief lifespan.²⁵ This brief lifespan becomes a point in time for information to impact on the reader, often without detail or immediate access to historical precedent.

Thus, the media takes numerous forms in today's society, from television and newspapers, to radio and the Internet. Yet, these are ultimately mere technical means for delivery of information, and are of themselves benign in their potential of influencing and shaping policy and action. Nevertheless, these means are important to the political government, because it is through them that people learn what the country, and government, is learning and doing.

But, although one could argue that the very purpose of the media is to inform, a potential danger may exist. This danger arrives in the form of an evolving media agenda, a position of its own that operates to directly or indirectly influence both leaders and the American people as to which decisions are "right", and for what specific reasons. When faced with this process, and an absence of objective facts to weight into the calculation, leaders and society run the risk of making decisions that may not be in the best interests of the parties concerned. Their decisions become a product of a biased view of reality, ones not necessarily founded in quantifiable data.

Thus, once the media loses a balance between accurately informing and "persuading", the environment for decision-making becomes clouded for all involved. It becomes incumbent upon leaders and planners in both the military and society to be aware of the potential for either intentional or inadvertent misuse of the military by the media for meeting a particular endstate. Whether this endstate is a commitment of military forces for a specific action, or withholding of commitment when such an action may be beneficial, leaders must make the final decision with the greatest preponderance of facts and reasonable assumptions overriding the influence of a specific and potentially biased media agenda.

As we explore the various roles of the media in society and history, we shall see that the media is both the technology and the personnel behind the

technology. It is concurrently feared and used by leaders to convey information, while monitoring the pulse of society as a whole. We may also see, though, that the media is actually a tool, used by both the media personnel and leaders for influencing the process of decision-making. For the purpose of objective analysis at this point, one should at least consider the probability that the media is by both design and consequence many things to many different people and groups.

"Bully Pulpit" For Policy

For an official to go before the public and openly voice a view or dissent on a policy or precedent is a hallmark feature of a democratic nation. Since the early 1900s, when President Theodore Roosevelt would stand before an audience and communicate ideas and direction, leaders of the 20th Century have recognized the importance of informing and advising the electorate on selective issues which may affect the nation. Roosevelt's "Bully Pulpit" became a means for interpersonal exchange of information during a time that preceded sweeping technological advances in electronic media.

Officials utilizing this method soon understood the importance and impact of such a mode of operation, and became well versed in the process of appealing directly to the mass audience. The moment had to be right; the topic clear and flushed clean of incrimination, and the speech polished and well rehearsed. As observed by one writer, the official knew "the formula of the news release, the timing, the spoon-feeding necessities of the publicity drive. He acquires a special standing among colleagues commensurate with his reflected power..."²⁶

As technology advanced, and the media moved from news print to auditory dialogue, the "pulpit" for communicating policy changed. During World War II President Roosevelt communicated the course of the fighting to the nation over the national radio networks during his "fireside chats." He suggested that listeners

buy maps in order to follow along with him the paths of the advancing Allied forces, and he referred them to the images in newsreels, Life, Saturday Evening Post, Time, and the other media of the day.²⁷

In fact, it is often the President that is most apt, and most able, to use the media for the purpose of expressing policy. It is the privilege that comes with the office of the President that gives him a virtually exclusive right to go before the nation through a media process that would seldom fail to accommodate his wishes. The President recognizes that, when there is strong support throughout an informed nation for the activities of the President and the military, most members of the press are not inclined to heavily criticize policy and action.

However, this view is not without its risks. Some members of the media feel that if they are not constantly criticizing governmental institutions, national leaders, or military commanders, a democratic system will deteriorate over time. This is, according to writer Perry M. Smith, the "slippery slope" argument: Give national leaders a respite from criticism and they will destroy our democratic institutions with their power and their arrogance.²⁸

In this capacity, the media imposes a balance upon decisions made by National leaders through applying a "tension" to the process. In viewing decisions, the media will often explore and provide to the public the various opinions that exist on a particular subject. They will research the "left and right" for divergence of views, search for hidden agendas, and propose where specific "propaganda" feeds into the picture. It is rare that the media unanimously reports or accepts a particular national decision, even when such decisions may seem to align with a agenda possessed by the media itself.

Thus, the media and the ability it provides officials to instantaneously reach large sectors of the population serves two needs: those of the official using the means, and the needs of the media personnel who receive information and

"shape" it as news to present to the people. The desire of public officials to seek this attention in order to attain or sustain political power is not new or revolutionary. What is comparatively recent and seemingly peculiar to the American system is the way in which publicity affects not only leaders and politics but the fundamental balance between the public need to know and the obligation of leaders to provide knowledge on government events. The "bully pulpit" role of the media may be, in a way, the purest expression of government itself.²⁹

"Telescope" For Viewing Implementation of Policy

"Television, particularly in the United States, is a consumer industry and, especially today, a highly competitive one. Its cameras see only what they are pointed at; what goes on behind the camera operator's back can be reported only by words and is not part of the visual record....result is to amplify what is before the camera lens and to minimize the significance of what is behind it."³⁰ This narrow perspective of reality, as observed by Alan Hooper in his book *The Military and the Media* tends to obscure and even distort the truth behind an event. It projects to the viewer only that image which is desired by the operator.

Such selective presentation becomes a manipulative process, and can on any given occasion be conducted by the media themselves, the military, or even the opposing force in a conflict. In an expanding information environment, it becomes virtually impossible for a viewer, whether he be a military commander or layman at home, to distinguish between what is simply information and what is in fact propaganda.³¹

Because of this process, the military must be able to stay in touch with what the media is saying to the public. The military must become and remain actively engaged with the media to keep a balanced perspective with the American people, and the politicians that represent the population. Martin Van Creveld, in

his book *Command In War*, discusses a concept which may aptly describe this particular balance of the military and media in today's society, that of a "telescope." In Van Creveld's view, a commander needs to have a detached, objective view "of the enemy's forces, the terrain, or his own army in order to bring in information that is not only less structured than that passed on by the normal channels but also tailored to meet his momentary and specific needs."³²

For the military leader, such a "directed telescope" may come via physical placement of a subordinate leader to provide an extra set of eyes on an evolving situation. But, at least in theory, the media could and at times does serve in this capacity, although precariously without directive or plan, and without particular loyalty to one side or another involved in a event. One could thus see a window of opportunity opening for the military to effectively utilize the telescoping effect of the media, if and only if the military remains attached to the media system.

If, however, the military opts to keep the media at a distance, problems could ensue in attempting to use the technology and reach of the media for service as an indicator of implementation of orders or policy. With broadcasters and news reporters subject to no supervision but their own, the media may act as an undirected telescope that can and does focus attention on individual events to the detriment of the picture as a whole. Their strong point--their ability to cut through the normal information channels--thus also constitutes a potential weakness in the telescope argument.

The challenge for military leaders and planners becomes not only accepting the need for staying in touch with the media, but also determining how to engage the media in order to provide direction in assessing the conduct of military operations. Events in Vietnam draw upon but one example of the importance of this engagement, and the results of a media opting to remain detached from a powerful media body.³³

Discussion of events occurring in Vietnam, such as the TET Offensive, could only narrowly be done without reference to the adequacy of the ordinary military reporting system and the enormous role played by the media, especially television. The importance of the media as a source of information for decisionmakers in Washington and even, to some extent, for the MACV in Saigon could best be understood as deriving in part from the media's seeming ability to cut through the military information system itself.

In fact, the media was able to transmit video of the battlefield and images of conflict to TVs around the world. Such a precursor to 1990s processes carried information directly to top leaders in the 1960s, bypassing the entire apparatus of intelligence, diplomacy, and national security, and may have resulted in an altering of government decisionmaking and military operations in Vietnam.³⁴

This process of viewing the battlefield, outside of formal channels of chain-of-command or controlled information flow, raises serious questions on whether media coverage influences foreign policy and forces hasty judgments and decisions.³⁵ Discussion of the media's past or future role as a directed or undirected telescope is a clear citation of the importance of leaders recognizing the potential impact of the media in policy formulation. The impact on future military operations, though, may be even more pronounced.

Today, real-time coverage of military decisions and subsequent events allows the world a clear, naked view of activities that can provoke either support or disdain for ongoing or future operations. The military leader is now but one participant in a National audience that "sees the battlefield" and has a vote in defining success to the American people and their political leaders.

Breach of Security

Traditionally, the military arm of government has placed a high priority on controlling the flow of information outside of official channels, guided by the principle of Operations Security or OPSEC. OPSEC is, according to Field Manual 34-10, *Division Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Operations* a "combination of actions taken to deny the enemy information about division forces, operations, capabilities, and intentions."³⁶ This process, sustained through classification of documents and controlled access to events and locations, has become increasingly difficult to maintain under the current expanding media environment, and the demand by the public for information about military activities.

Recognizing the media's ability to extend its technical arm to places previously impermeable to such access, the military established new machinery to control censorship, and rapidly extended this control into areas previously never touched. Categories of information that once had only the remotest relationship to military activity, such as production figures and weather reports, were brought under the same scrutiny of censors on the grounds that their publication might be of value to the enemy, might affect adversely friendly or neutral opinion, or might in some way impede the war effort.

As a result of such censorship, media information on events such as armed conflict became distorted, despite the fact that no major engagements were completely withheld from the public. This distortion was enhanced by restrictions on the reporting of details, withholding news for unnecessarily long periods, and at times official pressure for a favorable slanting of the news.³⁷

Denial of data and information, and the rapid development of information technologies, soon gave rise to an emergence of new methods by the media to manipulate public perceptions, emotions, interests, and choices. The media

possesses the ability to manipulate emotions and perceptions through mass medium--radio, TV, the Internet, or the Press--separately or in varying combinations. Particularly adept at this process is radio and television broadcasting, which traditionally operates with relative freedom of action and disdain for censorship.

News reports on CNN and other networks are immediately accessible by both the public and politicians all over the globe, and can cause a flurry of diplomatic activity if reports contradict positions taken in private. Such ability to influence decisions are thus viewed by numerous leaders as a threat, and an activity worthy of caution and even suspicion.³⁸

Thus, perceived or real threats posed from a modern information environment are compounded by such factors as new methods to manipulate public perceptions, emotions, interests, and choices, speed with which information can be relayed, and availability of masses of information to anyone who wants it.³⁹ Any media deviation from official sources might be perceived as a compromise of security, a threat to maintenance of military secrets, or a conduit to misinformation or disinformation.

The media is forced to gravitate toward official source information, which multiplies any preexisting friction in the media-military relationship.⁴⁰ Here, our previous discussion of engagement of military and the media becomes important, as such engagement could alleviate or at least attenuate this friction and provide a means of presenting sensitive information to the public without compromise of security requirements.

The role of the media, when defined as a breach of security, is in counterbalance to the requirement to present the news to the public as factually and as immediate as possible. This dilemma exposes a problem almost solely unique to a democratic system--the right to know what government is doing

weighted against the need to maintain an umbrella of security over operations.

The validity of an argument which serves to preserve the safety of soldiers in armed conflict, or the sanctity of the nation, meets head-on against a deeply ingrained concept in a society such as that in the U.S. That concept is the protection of the democratic ideal, a constitutional interpretation of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. This is no small dilemma, and one which finds no simple answer forthcoming absent our proposal for effective engagement of the military and the media in dialogue that seeks answers, rather than building barriers to information flow.

Extension of the Democratic Ideal

"A free and democratic society cannot long endure unless its citizens can participate effectively in the decisions which shape their future. No decisions are more important than those that bear on the defense, security, and survival of the country and its cherished institutions. The American people can choose and guide their leaders wisely only when the great public issues are clearly defined and freely debated. And this can happen only when the media of mass communications recognizes the right of the public to be informed".⁴¹ The right of information is a powerful catalyst for discussion and introspection, and cannot be ignored in any consideration of media influence.

The media is a powerful conduit for informing, motivating, and molding the attitudes of the American people. Over the years, the media has searched to find its niche in society, a society where home, school, and church are still the primary determinants of values and attitudes. Colleges and universities certainly assume an augmenting role through the generation of ideas and preparation of future teacher and other leaders.

But in the area of specific information on current public issues and views toward these issues, the mass media--newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV--have a more direct impact than other established institutions. It is the media that can appeal to, build upon, and sometimes even exploit the attitudes and values developed by the American culture as a whole. The media is the reference point, the focus of information, and arguably a powerful instrument of democratic instruction.⁴²

"It is axiomatic that one of the most vital questions of mass communication in a democracy is the development of an informed public opinion through the public dissemination of news and ideas concerning the vital public issues of the day....it is the right of the public to be informed."⁴³ In this pure and chaste form, one could easily derive a view that the media is not only a means of presenting information to a democratic society, but an integral piece of the American Institution. As proposed earlier in this paper, the role and influence of the media in government, military, and public actions takes on even greater significance when viewed through the lens of democratic government.

What, then, is the media in today's society? From what is presented to this point, the media is many things to many people, and takes numerous forms. The media includes all forms of commercial journalism, both print and electronic. In print, it includes newspapers, magazines, photojournalists and free-lance writers. Electronic media includes radio, television and available film crews.⁴⁴ Through these forms, the media assumes the role of savior and nemesis, of keeper of ideals and threat to security. It becomes a tool for egress, and an editor of truth and fact. The media, and its associated role, is ultimately what a given group perceives it to be, and how it serves particular interests.

For the military, such a perspective is not lost on history, but rather validated and studied as insight for future interaction with such a powerful instrument of

information and influence. Given this perspective and realization of how the media is a fundamental linkage in gaining consensus and decisions with the American people, both military and media leaders would seem to benefit from a relationship built on mutual understanding and respect, rather than animosity and mistrust.

If mutual engagement is the key to propagating this relationship, then examples from history may serve to demonstrate the importance of such an existing bond. By looking into history, one should seek clues as to how the military could have effected such a relationship, and individually assess how military outcomes may have been different had such a relationship existed.

III. MEDIA INFLUENCE IN RECENT MILITARY HISTORY

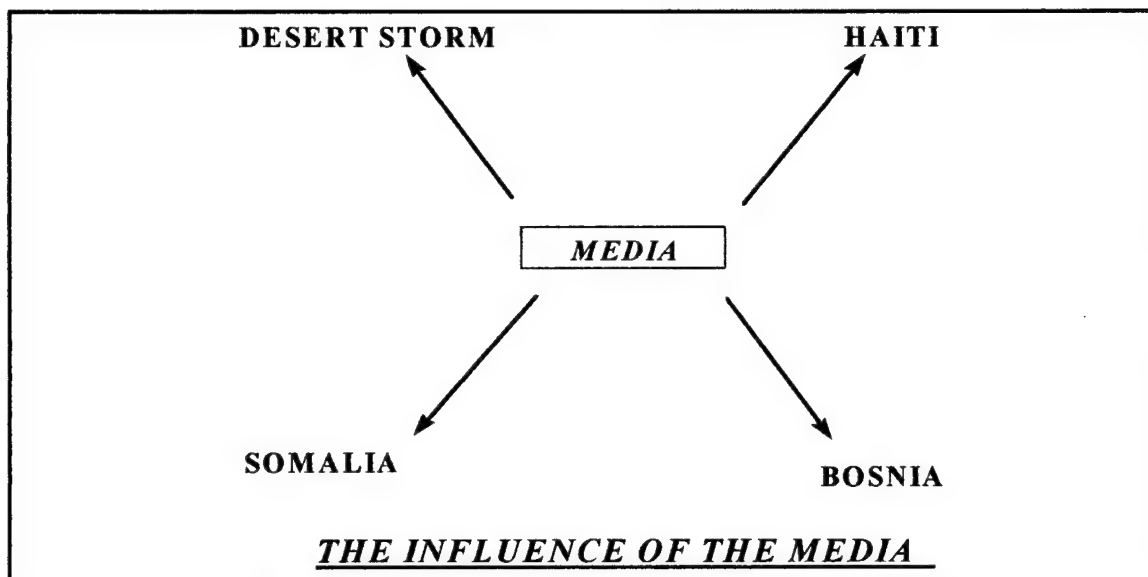


FIGURE 2, THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA

Any examination of the influence of the media on policy would be remiss without a look at history to seek examples where such influence may have existed. Intuitively, one could rightfully assume that history would provide a bountiful pool from which to draw upon for validation of ideals and supposition. This research is not limited to national policy, but readily presents examples where the military-media interaction resulted in outcomes that could easily have been different, had the media's presence not have been so pronounced or even so recognized.

For military-media relations, history prior to 1990 reveals an apparent evolution as both institutions matured and faced an ever-increasingly complex world. Although the military's relations with the media may have been assessed as satisfactory during World War II, the same could hardly be said for Korea and Vietnam. McArthur faced breaches of security during Korea, due in part to fierce competition among reporters and a failure by McArthur to specify clearly what

news was of value to the enemy. As a result, he had little choice but to invoke censorship.

Military information officers, for their part, provoked the press on a number of occasions by extending censorship into areas of legitimate discussion and by withholding information on matters that had little to do with military security. But, although the Army's experience with public affairs during the Korean War was laden with problems, the American news media appear for the most part to have supported the war.⁴⁵

Vietnam may be widely regarded as having been the first television war, although strictly speaking the Korean War more accurately deserves that description. But rather than being deemed an asset to a nation seeking information about its youth in a foreign land, television was widely blamed by many national and social leaders for having alienated American public sympathy and support for Vietnam. Instead of evaluating the performance of national and military leaders during this conflict, America became convinced that an explanation for the single remaining blemish on America's military record had been found: the enemy within had been their very own media.⁴⁶ Television assumed an important and often forboding role in planning military public relations during and for a substantial period following the 1960s.

For example, after the Grenada Invasion, studies done at the request of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended the implementation of a press pool as a control means. This pool would involve a small group of reporters and photographers representing the print and broadcast media chosen from a prepared roster to accompany the military. Their reports would later be pooled or shared by media organizations.⁴⁷ Although not a new concept, press pooling and other means of control became a topic that continues to raise serious

questions as military leaders appreciate the importance, and potential influence, media presence can have on the execution and outcome of war.

Thus, as a result of decisive military strategy in Vietnam and Grenada being substituted by public relations, late 20th-century American military-media relationship reflects the tenuous, larger relationship that exists between the government and the American people. Yet, in order to effectively respond to the challenges that the future will bring, that relationship must arguably be one of mutual trust and comprehension.⁴⁸ It is here that a study of history becomes an important means to seeking answers, and possibly better relations.

For example, history could show that lessons from such military actions as Vietnam and Grenada include inexperience of reporters at the beginning of a major conflict, realities of propaganda and its impact on public opinion, and the basic realities of war reporting and generalizing. In this regard, both the military and the media could possibly value from an education provided by history.⁴⁹

What lessons, then, should one anticipate recent military history reflecting that demonstrates an increased understanding and seeking of engagement between the military and the media? Certainly, technological changes since the Vietnam era have increased the size of the news operation and the speed at which information flows across the communications links from event to general public.⁵⁰ In such an environment, one would assume that there would be a greater appreciation for mutual military-media cooperation in providing information and news to the American public. But, there are ample examples where just the opposite apparently occurred, examples where the military remained detached from the media or even became more critical of their involvement in operations.

Instead of finding ways to work with the media, and involve the media in the military planning process, military leaders on far too many occasions reverted to dated tactics of hiding critical information from the media, refusing to permit

viewing and publicity of military events, and on occasion even denying access to the fundamental day-to-day life of soldiers living in combat conditions. Certain positive outcomes can also be extracted, and are worthy of consideration as we seek solutions to more effective military-media engagement.

But, one must eventually discern from recent military events that the media can no longer simply be ignored or contained. Thus, a study of 1990 conflicts, specifically Desert Storm, Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia, may demonstrate the need for a change in how the military and media interact to serve the interest of the nation. It may also underline the new and evolving role of the media as a significant influence on military services, the government, and the public.⁵¹

Desert Storm (1991)

Much has been written about the overwhelming victory of the Coalition forces against the Iraqi Army. Certainly, such a performance is due in no small part to superiority in technology, training, and employment of weapon systems to maximize effects on the battlefield. But to ignore the role of the media in the planning and execution of operations would be to neglect a key element that will become more visible and important in future conflict. Desert Storm demonstrated a military maturity in understanding the significance of the media on the battlefield, and the potential advantages and disadvantages of its presence in theater.

This maturity grew out of the years preceding Desert Storm, and events which shaped the military's view of the media. As discussed earlier, Vietnam provided the military and the world a distinct and direct reality to what the media is capable of, if left to its own accord and agenda. Actions in Grenada went a step further in demonstrating the influence the media can have in defining success on the battlefield, and presenting that success to the world.

Through studying these and similar military events, the military grew in an understanding of how the media operates in combat, and how important it is to gain some level of cooperation with the media. At the start of Desert Storm the military community may have retained some skepticism of the media, but was able to at least dilute such feelings with recognition of the power and capability of the media to directly impact on how military operations are viewed by both the American people and the world.

For example, preparations for the ground war phase of Desert Storm included a concerted effort by the Coalition to disorient and confuse the enemy by any and every means. This process resulted in the planning of fake amphibious operations, conducting special operations behind enemy lines, and deliberately leaking misinformation to the media that outlined numerous maneuver options picked upon by Iraqi intelligence. This added dimension of using the media to indirectly support or enhance deception procedures could be interpreted as a concession to the reality of instant communications becoming more assessable to the most remote of battlefields.⁵² Coalition leaders and planners realized that dissemination of information via the media could enhance efforts to keep Iraqi leaders confused as to future intent, without directly lying to the public or compromising the security of the operation.

This recognition of the importance of news forums such as CNN lead planners to consciously include the "media factor" into mission analysis and action development. Certainly media coverage was becoming increasingly more important at the diplomatic level, as talks between the leaders of Iraq and the United States set conditions for strategic action. But rather than being solely a means of broadcasting diplomatic hyperbole, the media coverage could also be exploited for propaganda purposes.

A requirement for judicious and cautious introspection enters here, as U.S. military and national leaders recognize that overt exploitation of the media for the expressed purpose of espousing propaganda is illegal, and contrary to the basic principles of democratic freedom of speech. But, in that the media is accessible by both friend and foe, there appeared to be an opportunity for mutual cooperation between the military and the media. The media could be provided access to the battlefield in order to fulfill their role of presenting the war to the public.

In turn, National and military leaders could use such events as press conferences and updates to overtly provide a specific picture to the Iraqi leadership, while presenting a positive image of progress to the American public. The media is content with their relative freedom of action, while becoming a conduit for telling a story that is both favorable and enhancing to Coalition military operations. This cooperation provides a secondary effect, that of directing the focus of the media in order to keep Coalition leaders aware of actions and activities within Iraq that may have a bearing on Coalition operations. As discussed earlier, Van Creveld's "directed telescope" concept becomes beneficial to the military, and enhances rather than detracts from operations on the battlefield.

Thus, Iraqi access to CNN could become a conduit for sending messages to the leadership, whether accurate or otherwise. Modern communications technology thus provided both an opportunity and a threat for the media managers. For the Coalition as well as for Iraq, balancing the flow of information to the media to sustain public support at home for prosecuting war while judiciously utilizing the medium for disinformation and propaganda purposes would become a challenge that both political and military leaders would have to meet in a new age of instantaneous telecommunications.⁵³

But, the reality of media presence did more than provide an opportunity for enhancing military conditions. Once Desert Storm began, leaders began to question what reasonable controls, if any, should be placed on journalists and television crews intent on broadcasting combat scenes to the public? Western journalists present in Baghdad during the air campaign created the illusion that war was being fought out in full view of a global audience.

However, the noted absence of cameras in Kuwait or at the Iraqi front line during the initial days of the ground war meant that neither progress or failure at the locations where the war was mainly won and lost were being seen by the global audience. Such apparent controls led some journalists to comment that The Gulf War was "not CNN's war or television war, it belonged to the coalition's armed forces, and to the victors went the spoils of the information war."⁵⁴

Regardless, Desert Storm did seem to indicate that the military had matured since the days of Vietnam in working with an increasingly powerful and influential information machine. In contrast to Vietnam and Grenada, the military provided the media unprecedented real-time coverage of events leading up to and including the ground campaign. Military leaders conducted nightly updates on the situation in theater, attended by the media and broadcast to a waiting world.

Subordinate commanders linked up with press personnel for open discussion on issues such as morale and discipline, and often transported media to the front lines of operations. The military began demonstrating a relative acceptance of the media in operations, recognizing the benefits to be gained from such engagement. The media broadcast to the world the overwhelming victory of the Coalition, with emotion and pomp that fueled a feeling in the American public of pride and support for the military and National leaders.

But the military-media relationship was far from symbiotic or smooth. Limited aims were achieved on both sides; near-instantaneous images of war were

provided by the media to the public, while the military benefited from a disinformation campaign that reached the highest levels of Iraqi command. Tension would continue to exist between the two systems, and would become very evident as the United States faced its next, and strategically unique, armed conflict. But, the seeds were planted for future growth and maturation, as the military and media found common ground in operating and cooperating in combat conditions.

Somalia (1992)

Somalia demonstrated the pronounced and direct impact images of starvation can have on a viewing audience, specifically that of the United States. From a military perspective, doing nothing in Somalia may have been preferred, but strategic and political implications of inaction soon took hold. With elections upcoming, and a political opponent (now President Clinton) openly supporting action to ameliorate conditions presented by television images broadcast every night, President Bush faced an awkward dilemma. His choice was to either risk deploying forces to stabilize conditions in Somalia, or risk the brunt of a media capable of influencing public perceptions about U.S. policy in Somalia. President Bush's decision, that of feeding Somalia's population, became a more viable and acceptable option.⁵⁵

This decision was influenced in no small way by the United States' inability to do anything significant to improve the conditions that existed for Muslims in Bosnia, together with a perception that the U.S could actually help in Muslim Somalia.⁵⁶ At the very least, media coverage of events in Somalia forced political leaders to take a fresh look at options available to the U.S. in providing assistance. The nation's leadership realized that inaction was becoming less of

an option as visibility in the region increased, and the media shaped public opinion.

Thus, SEALs and Marine scouts from the 15th MEU paddled ashore near the port of Mogadishu in the early hours of 9 December 1992 as an initial force for providing support to Somalia, only to be met by unexpected throngs of camera crews with bright lights. As television crews and the reconnaissance teams postured for each other, the rest of the landing team surged ashore.⁵⁷ In what some observers deemed as a surreal series of events early on that morning, the press was the only impediment to progress.

However, despite this uneventful landing, and subsequent early progress in providing logistical support to Somalia, U.S. policymakers and military leaders failed to convey to the public the reasons for what appeared to be shifting U.S. goals and missions in Somalia. Likewise, little information was provided on the possible consequences of the changing relations with the U.N. and with the warlords in country. There had been insufficient warnings to foreshadow the growing Somali hostility to the U.N., or the buildup to events of this magnitude. Concurrently, media stories failed to link such complexities as Somali warlord politics, tensions between military peacekeepers and non-governmental aid organizations, and shifting US missions.⁵⁸

Thus, a critical linkage seemed to be missing, a linkage of political and military engagement of the media to set conditions for success. Reminiscent of the Vietnam era, National and military leaders appear to have either forgotten or opted to exclude the media from a continuing dialogue on changing conditions in Somalia. The media assumed an "undirected" role in broadcasting from Somalia, and leaders evidently put little effort into shaping or changing this situation. The American public received a mixed picture of events in Somalia, and evaluation of

success and failure became subjective as time progressed and objectives became redefined.

In fact, media coverage of growing insecurity may have contributed to the pressure that something be done about the strongman Aidid. News coverage of the ill-fated Ranger raid in October, 1993, had rapid and enormous domestic political impact. Broadcasts of dead U.S. Marines being dragged through the Somalia streets at the very least hastened, and perhaps also drove, a policy reversal by the administration. According to National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, "the television pictures helped us recognize that the military situation in Mogadishu had deteriorated in a way that we had not frankly recognized."⁵⁹

As events on the beach at Mogadishu, Somalia, clearly revealed, the news media have essentially solved the primary issue of access, a media concern following the Persian Gulf War. This has resulted in images of military personnel performing their tasks while surrounded by reporters who often seem to be regarding them as "objects of curiosity." Ironically, these situations can be as harmless as organized visits to forward combat positions, or as potentially dangerous as the dramatic meeting of military and media personnel on the beach in Somalia.⁶⁰ In either event, the questions of security and safety inevitably arise, and with them the concern for access to military events.

Somalia gained media attention, especially television, and became a story about conflict and famine. The arrival of troops in the early morning hours was perfectly timed to reach the afternoon peak television audience in the U.S. and hundreds of well-briefed reporters were on the beach and at the port.⁶¹ But, the question to be considered in this paper may be whether intervention in Somalia came as a response to a fever pitch of media coverage, or when it seemed that constant public exposure to Somalia's plight had failed to secure action.⁶²

Moreover, several key lessons could be extracted from events in Somalia. One could surmise that once the National leadership decided that action was necessary, the military should have assessed the potential role of the media in subsequent operations. Had military leaders actively engaged the media, the initial landing of forces could have been coordinated so as to provide the opportunity for media coverage without the potentially dangerous presence of media personnel at the critical point of the landing. As the situation changed in Somalia, open dialogue with the media may have shaped what appeared to be raw coverage of deteriorating conditions, and may even have contributed to persuading Somali leadership to U.S. desires and requirements.

Finally, an active military-media engagement may have served as a "directed telescope" for military leaders to use in assessing the sentiment of the Somali population. Leaders apparently did not review important lessons from Desert Storm, and the result was a detached military-media effort that worked to the detriment of the military and National leadership. Thus, one can surmise, from documentation of events, that media coverage played a large part in defining both success and failure of the Somalia operations.

The media created pressure at the National level for successful initial intervention, as well as pressure for the eventual military withdrawal after failure to capture Aidid.⁶³ The military felt the pressure, yet failed to utilize the media as a tool for positive influence. The amount of actual influence of the media on strategic decisions may remain an issue of debate, a debate not clearly resolved in light of events in Haiti.

Haiti (1994)

For the most part, a balance between policy concerns and media interest gave Haiti a high profile in the final months of the Bush administration, in the 1992

presidential campaign, and in the early months of the Clinton administration. Following the ousting of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in a military coup in September, 1991, the U.S. media kept alive the twin issues of democracy and human rights. A debate between the media and U.S. policymakers soon became polarized as the issue of intervention became more visible to the public.⁶⁴

However, once the President decided on military intervention, the administration changed from reacting to the media to attempting to manage it. An initial effort by the Pentagon to control coverage of the occupation through the traditional "pool system" broke down, due to the sheer number of journalists in country. Rather than react with anger or resentment, though, all major networks did agreed to delay broadcasting for some time after the troops were safely on the ground.

This cooperation, although not representing a complete consensus among all reporters, appears to be an implementation of lessons learned from the Somalia landing, as well as the security requirements for the deception effort in Desert Storm. Additionally, once on the ground, U.S. forces received what many military and media leaders believed to be fair, albeit constant, coverage of unfolding events.⁶⁵

Media coverage of events in Haiti demonstrated a participatory influence in how the administration and military leaders planned and enacted policy. For example, television coverage of the Haitian army paramilitary group FRAPH against Aristide supporters is widely held to have influenced changes in U.S. policy, enabling troops to play a more assertive role in maintaining law and order and protecting Aristide supporters. Ironically, as reality set in that the Haiti conflict was not going to escalate beyond a police action, senior correspondents of U.S. networks and newspapers didn't stay long in country. Only a handful

were present in February 1996 to witness the democratic transfer of power at the inauguration of Aristide's successor.⁶⁶

At the national level, early media coverage had a major, potentially embarrassing role in citing the Clinton administration for failing to solve Haiti's human rights crisis. Film of atrocities committed under the military rulers of Haiti created pressure for action to make the situation on the ground conform to President Clinton's stated policy on the region. The media acted to push the administration to live up to its word. Subsequently, though, the media's coverage of the invasion helped deliver a substantial boost to Clinton's poll ratings.⁶⁷

The Haitian military regime also felt the contribution of the media as a tool for national policy in October 1993 when the U.S.S. Harlan County, intent on a more robust assertion of U.S. policy, turned away from Port-au-Prince at the sight of a hostile mob on the shore. Aware of the Somalia incident with the U.S. Rangers, the Haitian military regime made calculated use of CNN coverage to threaten the United States with a repeat of the Somalia experience.⁶⁸

This issue, the apparent indiscriminate role or potential of the media's use by either side, is one that must be understood by military planners as an example of the "undirected telescope" discussed in Chapter II of this paper. Both sides either benefit or suffer at the hands of media coverage, and such a reality may or may not be intentional on the part of those providing the information to the public.

Lessons from Haiti show that mutual engagement countered operational security concerns by openly discussing with the media such issues as not revealing sensitive landing times and initial operations concepts in order to enhance the safety of soldiers involved in early actions. Likewise, military planners, understanding the presence and influence of the media, actively worked to incorporate the media in day-to-day operations. This required a careful assessment of the personalities and agendas of media participants, and

discussion on the potential ramifications of unimpeded visibility of operations in Haiti.

Additionally, this assessment effort was coordinated with the National level to ensure that the stories coming out of Haiti would align with reality on the ground. Planners directed the focus of the media, without unacceptable interference or censorship. Through these efforts, the "CNN effect" became a combat multiplier for defining success, rather than the detriment to operations seen in Somalia. The world, and the Haitian people, saw and heard the coverage of a successful U.S. intervention in Haiti, and the result was a cooperative spirit to restore normalcy to the country without the requirement for direct combat.

As conflicts continue on in time, without apparent resolution, the media can assume a very influential role in presenting a picture of either futility or hope, a call to temperance or one to action. Haiti is an example where media coverage became a major factor in the decision for national and military action. It also serves as an example of a synthesizing by national and military leaders of previous lessons to effect a desired outcome in military operations.

In the final historical case, Bosnia, a sustainment of this synthesis can be seen, but much remains to be written on the influence of the media on policy and use of the military arm to impact on a volatile situation. Yet, progress to date seems to indicate a level of military-media engagement that is far advanced from the days of Vietnam, and characterized by a quality that seems lasting for future operations.

Bosnia (1995)

From the outset of Bosnian hostilities in 1991, the media conducted virtually continuous news coverage of the conflicts. From an early assessment, one could deem the media not to have had a major impact on the strategic policy of

Western governments, that dealing with potential military intervention. Yet, peaks of shocking news coverage from Bosnia did seem to influence the tactics used by governments. Air drops, emergency medical evacuations from Sarajevo by the UK, and NATO's protection measures for the Bosnian capital were all responses to well-televised predicaments.⁶⁹

The power of the indigenous media in Former Yugoslavia was both a negative force that inflamed the conflict and a positive force in the cause of reconciliation. Serb, Croat, and Bosnian authorities all made cynical and brutally effective use of the media as weapons of war. Aware of the critical influence of Western public opinion, warring factions went all out to manipulate foreign media where they could not contain them. Yet, television images of the bloody shelling of a Sarajevo marketplace in February 1994 sealed an international consensus that was already in the making, rather than create new policy.⁷⁰

In contrast to the Gulf War, though, there was no clear governmental position in Bosnia from which Western and global media might take their cue. Television channels and newspapers varied in general and at particular times in their endorsement for expanding intervention. Reporters often urged that something be done, in light of the atrocities they witnessed and covered.⁷¹ Arguably, though, the turnaround of the post-Yugoslav wars in late 1995 is attributable in large part to military and diplomatic initiatives in which media coverage played indirect roles, and which can more accurately be traced to developments in U.S. policy as well as the actions of the combatants.⁷²

Perhaps, it was a combination of President Clinton's fear of negative coverage of a continuing Bosnian War, and repeated Serbian humiliations of the West, that ultimately contributed to the President seeking the 1995 Dayton settlement. To the disdain of some media writers and broadcasters, the Administration took action that appeared tempered by the recent memory of Somalia. President

Clinton seemed to follow the Bush lead in settling for a more conservative position on immediate force employment, although keeping available the ready use of airpower.⁷³ Media presence and coverage in Bosnia may have had a catalytic effect on U.S. action, but did not appear to influence what could have been rash deployment of forces before some terms could be reached between warring factions.

But, once again, the impact of media coverage on the support for and understanding of military intervention cannot be totally ignored. French President Mitterrand, filmed walking through the rubble of besieged Sarajevo, helped his countrymen understand why France supplied most of Bosnia's UN peacekeepers. The heavily watched 1994 Winter Olympics TV coverage contrasted with scenes of Olympic-village Sarajevo in 1984 with contemporary scenes of war-ravaged Sarajevo. These compelling images, coupled with video of war-weary civilians, reinforced the shock effect of scenes such as the marketplace casualties of a Serbian mortar attack, and could have helped coalesce U.S. support for tougher NATO and U.N. policies toward the Bosnian Serbs.⁷⁴

At this point, coverage of Bosnia has diminished much the same way as follow-on events in Somalia and Haiti, and is likely to remain even as long as relative stability remains in the region. But one should not ignore the fact that the initial coverage of the first days of military intervention could have demonstrated the volatility liking such coverage as that seen in Somalia had there not been distinct progress in military-media engagement. In fact, there appears to be a mutually acceptable balance in the existing relationship, one that bears the wisdom of lessons learned from previous events. In Bosnia, the lessons may not easily stand out in day-to-day operations, but become apparent in viewing the progress the military has made over the previous 5-7 years of working with the media.

Drawing upon lessons from previous conflicts, military leaders at all levels now receive training prior to deployment in understanding and dealing with the presence of the media that may be located in their specific areas of operation. This training continues in country, and is not used as a means of directing soldiers in what to say or do. Rather, such training provides tools in how to present a picture to the media of operations in the most realistic, positive light.

For example, images of soldiers conversing with the local population becomes sincere indicators of the concern the military has in restoring normalcy to the region, while indirectly presenting a positive state of morale and discipline among soldiers in country. Coverage of aircraft and armor in country send directed signals to the factions that the U.N. is prepared to use military might if necessary. Additionally, recent press coverage of restoration of buildings and return of children to school provide the world a positive picture of progress made through military intervention.

Perhaps the greatest indicator of progress in military-media relations may be in the apparent absence of negative reports citing undue media censorship or imposition of control measures like those seen in previous conflicts. Although concerns may exist in society as to the endstate or duration of future operations, as well as Western Press concerns about local freedom of speech in Bosnia, there is little to indicate pronounced strain in the military-media relationship either in theater or at the U.S. National level.

To this point, a mutual openness and honesty seems to exist that serves to keep the public informed, and explain why continued U.S. presence is required. As such, there has been and continues to be a linkage between National and military aims as pertaining to the media. Engagement appears to be working in Bosnia, thanks in no small part to an awareness at all levels of the military of the importance of such engagement.

It would be premature to cite Bosnia as an example of success in establishment of sound military-media engagement. Many months or even years may pass before a political or military endstate is achieved. Nonetheless, the current conflict does seem to indicate that cooperation between the military and the media is being realized, and with this cooperation has come a common understanding of the needs and desires of both agencies. Lessons out of Bosnia, combined with those previously cited, may present a concrete example of a system the military should both sustain and build upon as we move forward into the 21st Century.

Historical Findings

This study of four recent events involving military intervention seems to indicate an evolution in military-media attitudes, one that may selectively exhibit less animosity and more cooperation. As military execution changed from a conventional, war-fighting role as seen in Desert Storm to one of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in areas such as Haiti and Bosnia, the current military-media environment can be noted for trends that could indicate progress in some areas, yet validate additional work in others. Discussing these trends may provide insight into what efforts should be sustained, and what may need improvement. Additionally, such exploration may serve to demonstrate the power the media has to influence policy, define success or failure, and curtail or prolong military operations.

DESERT STORM

Out of Desert Storm came unprecedented real-time coverage of events leading up to and including the ground campaign. Significant findings include 1) military leaders utilizing nightly conferences to update the media and the world on the situation in theater, 2) subordinate commanders openly discussing issues

such as morale and discipline with the media, 3) media personnel accompanying commanders to the front lines of operations, and 4) use of Iraqi access to CNN to direct the sending of messages to the Iraqi leadership, in support of a disinformation and deception effort.⁷⁵

These findings indicate that military-media engagement worked to define eventual success by enhancing Coalition deception efforts, while fueling a positive view of the military that both won and sustained public support for military actions. Ironically, the success of military efforts to better involve the media actually curtailed the need for sustained military operations, as National and military leaders realized that media coverage of continued combat beyond the 100-hour mark of the ground war could have a detrimental effect on the ability to sustain public support, and Coalition unity.

The media demonstrated an awareness of what the U.S. political Leaders had defined as success to the American people. Likewise, our military leaders recognized the success criteria had been advanced, both militarily and politically. Thus, Desert Storm became noteworthy as a cooperative military-media event where near-instantaneous images of war were provided by the media to the public, with the military benefiting from a disinformation campaign that reached the highest levels of Iraqi command.

SOMALIA

Operations in Somalia seem to highlight a regression in military-media engagement from that seen in Desert Storm. Key findings out of Somalia were 1) media coverage of events in Somalia influencing political leaders to take a fresh look at options available to the U.S. in providing initial assistance to Somalia, 2) images of military personnel performing their tasks while surrounded by reporters who had independently arrived on the beach of Somalia, 3) broadcasts of dead U.S. Marines being dragged through the Somalia streets following the failed

Ranger raid of October, 1993, and 4) media stories that failed to link such complexities as Somali warlord politics, or tensions between military peacekeepers and non-governmental aid organizations.⁷⁶

The resulting detached military-media effort worked to the detriment of the military and National leadership. The media influenced national policy through the nation's leadership, who realized that inaction in Somalia in light of images of starving children was becoming less of an option with increasing media visibility in the region.⁷⁷ Once in country, media coverage, independent of military input, played a large part in defining both success and failure of the Somalia operations, and served to curtail operations in Somalia.

As noted in the findings, the media documented the initial successful flow of logistical support and cessation of hostilities in Somalia. Following the failed attempt to capture Aidid, though, the media televised graphic images which created pressure on National leaders for the eventual military withdrawal of U.S. forces.⁷⁸ Unlike operations in Desert Storm, National and military leaders were ineffective in Somalia in utilizing the media as a tool for positive influence.

HAITI

Haiti appears to represent a synthesis of lessons learned from Desert Storm and Somalia, with a concurrent maturing in military-media engagement. Findings include 1) open discussion with the media over not publicizing sensitive landing times and initial operations, 2) military planners working to incorporate and focus the media in day-to-day operations, 3) military planners conducting assessment of the personalities and agendas of media participants, and 4) coordination by military planners (linkage) with the National level to ensure that the stories coming out of Haiti would align with reality on the ground.⁷⁹

Through these efforts, the media became a combat multiplier for defining success through presenting a clear image to the world of events as they unfolded

in Haiti, while not compromising actions in the early hours of intervention. This positive image of actions, coupled with relative freedom of movement in Haiti, worked to win public support for sustaining operations in Haiti, even when it became apparent that direct combat would not be necessary.⁸⁰ The media coverage presented a successful U.S. intervention in Haiti, with a resulting cooperative commitment among National leaders and the U.S. public to restore normalcy to the country.

BOSNIA

Although remaining an ongoing and evolving situation, early findings in Bosnia are positive, as evidenced by 1) open, real-time media coverage of war-ravaged Sarajevo, coupled with video of war-weary civilians, 2) media coverage of military and NGO air drops, emergency medical evacuations from Sarajevo by the UK, and NATO's protection measures for the Bosnian capital, 3) training of military leaders at small-unit level and above prior to deployment in understanding and dealing with peacekeeping operations, to include operating with media personnel that may be located in their specific areas of operation, and 4) a general absence of negative reports citing undue media censorship or imposition of military control measures like those seen in previous conflicts.⁸¹

Thus, the media influenced National policy in the region by presenting images of war that worked to coalesce U.S. support for tougher NATO and U.N. policies toward the Bosnian Serbs. It assisted in defining success through presenting such images as soldiers conversing with the local population as an indicator of return to control in the region, and coverage of aircraft and armor in country that sends signals to the factions that the U.N. is prepared to use military might if necessary.⁸² And, the media coverage of effective cessation of fighting and a supportive local population has acted to prolong presence in the region, presence that may be vital to the preventing the return to fighting by the factions.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Given the volatile, unstable, and ambiguous environment in which armed forces can find themselves, military leaders must realize that their actions and those of their military forces are often intimately linked to strategic decisions, and have a greater chance than ever before of affecting subsequent strategic decisions made at higher levels. The military more than ever before is obliged to ensure that the ends and means of military operations are consistent with policy objectives, thereby helping policymakers explain to the public and press the connections between operations and policy.

In this endeavor, under the scrutiny of the media body, policymakers risk appearing cold or calculating, or even untruthful, to the press in their process of explaining such things as "national interests". Without a clear appreciation of the role of the media in influencing opinion, policymakers can be perceived simultaneously by the press and the public as espousing military policy that is devoid of values or a "human face", and merely justifying military action.⁸³

Additionally, though, military leaders must recognize that the media's involvement, or lack of, can create perception of success or failure in policy. The media presents conflicts such as Somalia and Bosnia to the viewing public, creating the perception of enormous suffering and violations of human rights that went counter to those principles avowed by the international community. Images of large-scale suffering and violations of human rights can have a direct and lasting impact on public opinion and support for military action.⁸⁴

Under such influence by the media, U.S. policymakers and military leaders must now appreciate the importance of being open and honest in reflecting human ideas and values of national interests in policy and subsequent military operations. The "human face" of policies becomes not only a means of gaining support for action, but may also become a powerful force in sustaining military

strategy in the face of international dissension or changing political personalities. Without this "human face" in policy, and a perception of openness and honesty, the policymaker's and military leader's ability to gain or sustain public support and favorable public opinion for those policies would be questionable at best.

One may derive a key lesson from this study about the influence of the media on government and military leaders. Leaders must communicate to the media the goals of policies and the objectives of military operations clearly and simply enough so that the widest of audiences can envision the ways and the means being used to reach those goals. Additionally, leaders must convey a definable endstate. This understanding needs to extend from the President down to the most junior soldier. The operational ways and means must be clear and simple so individuals can understand how they personally are being affected.

Additionally, motives for military operations need to be equally clear and simple, but also compelling, so that the media and, subsequently, the public will want to support these operations, while adversaries will feel powerless to escape the inevitable outcome if they oppose our goals. By policymakers and military leaders drawing these pictures and conveying this strategic understanding, they should have little fear of media coverage on the battlefields of the future. The media will convey the images to a public that understand why and how military action must be done.⁸⁵ Through the government, the media will shape and influence public opinion, to the advantage of both the government and the military.

With the inevitable and powerful influence of the media, government and military leaders must appreciate the importance of openness and honesty in presenting to the public, via media means, views on national interests in policy and associated military operations. The public should view the media as an agency that informs them of ongoing issues and events, balancing needs and

demands of the nation with the interests, beliefs, and agenda of varying groups in society. In this regard, the media accurately fills the role proposed in Chapter I, that of the "4th element of the Trinity."

The media is truly many things to many people, and historical examples validate the influence the media had in policy formulation and execution. History also shows the media demonstrating the ability to define success for military operations. It is with this appreciation of the power of the media that the final Chapter explores a proposal for how the military should view, assess, and enjoin the media on the fields of conflict. This proposal entails the creation of an assessment process of media presence and influence that recognizes the expanding influence of the media in government and, subsequently, the military.

IV. MILITARY AND THE MEDIA: A NEW APPROACH

For today's commanders and planners there is a significant value to dedicating time, resources and technology to more effectively assessing and integrating the media with the military. The media has the potential to define success or failure of a military operation to the American people faster than the military chain of command. The media has both a powerful international and influencing role with the world community and leadership. It can potentially define will and commitment, and subsequently determine whether a military operation is prolonged or curtailed.

Because of this ever expanding media influence, the military must establish a "partnership" with the media that becomes a routine, day-to-day exchange. Commanders and planners must commit to building a relationship of trust and access today that will benefit them when tomorrow's media broadcasts battlefield stories of military performance and dedication. This relationship is not done by exception, but rather by consistently demonstrating a sincere desire to reach out to the media in a spirit of mutual engagement.

In order to realize such a trusting relationship, military planners must make an assessment (Figure 3) that addresses the potential influence of the media on specific operations, the impact of such influence, and indicators that would alert military leaders to unacceptable or potentially compromising media presence in a particular facet of the operation. Such an assessment is both appropriate and necessary within the realm of the concept of Information Operations, defined by Field Manual 100-6, Information Operations as "continuous military operations within the Military Information Environment (MIE) that enable, enhance, and protect the friendly forces' ability to collect, process, and act on information to achieve an advantage across the full spectrum of military operations."⁸⁶

| Question | Analysis |
|---|--|
| 1. Who are the media participants/leaders? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Personalities b. Background/past patterns c. Experience d. Representation (U.S./other) e. Potential audience |
| 2. What does media expect to see/participate in? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Knowledge of operation b. Prior conduct of similar operations c. Security Clearance d. Number of participants e. Media tools (cameras, tapes, satellite access, etc.) |
| 3. Who is the audience of the media representatives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Possible agenda b. Operations worth highlighting |
| 4. What can military do to support request? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Escort/Assignment req.(by units) b. Risk assessment to participants c. Optimum location in AO d. Required equipment (transport, flak vests, etc.) e. Time allowed in AO f. Impact on OPSEC/OPTempo |
| 5. What story does military desire the media to tell? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Details to enhance operation (deception, etc.) b. PSYOPS/CA linkage c. Linkage to higher mission/intent d. Public Affairs/human interest spins |
| 6. Indicators of problems w/media presence? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Unauthorized intrusion b. Specific questions c. Perception of specific coverage |
| 7. Required authority/linkage? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Local b. Higher (theater) c. National |

FIGURE 3, PROPOSED MEDIA ASSESSMENT

An assessment of media presence, and potential influence, supports the IO arena by ensuring appropriate measures exist to safeguard operations, while

supporting the needs for openness in operations. For example, military planners should understand who the media participants are, and what the media expects to see. The planner could use this information as a gauge when offering particular locations for the media to occupy for broadcasting news. Additionally, the assessment serves to shape the media operation to the benefit of both the media representatives and the military. This part of the assessment would include understanding such factors as personalities of both the media and own forces, and well as the number of media present.

Of particular importance to the military planner is assessment of the media's means of broadcasting information. In addition to traditional means such as cameras, tapes, and written press, today's media possesses the capabilities for instantaneous satellite communications. These communications links provide media the means to broadcast news to the public faster than military communications can relay quantitative information to higher headquarters. Military planners, understanding that such capabilities may be as important as any Battle Operating System, must anticipate or "see" the impact that such immediacy may have in shaping political and public opinion early in an operation. Planners need access to the same fast and direct technology, and media engagement may provide for such access.

Media assessments in any format should assist in resolving key concerns. One concern rests with military and news media both sharing a common interest in providing a more complete picture of military operations than is available at a news briefing. This can best be accomplished by planners determining opportunities for personal contact between the members of the force and reporters covering the story. Such access is important from the news media's perspective because the information available at news conferences communicates only part of the total story. Concurrent with this access, though,

must be the continuous assessment for indicators of problems arising from such access, problems that may require clearance or resolution at higher levels in order to continue a smooth engagement with the media.

Thus, assessments should address the mission at hand and the media audience. Certain operations may have particular stories that relate to specific media audiences. Military planners must therefore know the "spin" to tell the story; that is, planners must understand how they want a story perceived by the public, and shape the media on the battlefield to promote that perception.

Another concern to be resolved by assessments is how the military can best support the media's desire to talk with soldiers in a combat zone. Commander's can effectively communicate with the public through the perspectives and the experiences of the members of their commands. How soldiers live and work in a combat zone appeals to numerous interests, and such coverage may have a positive bonding effect with a society who can exhibit pride in the military, while voicing understandable concern for the safety and welfare of their family members. The operational challenge, though, is to resolve the dilemma of being unable to accommodate all reporters simultaneously, while allowing open and independent reporting without the bounds of traditional press pools.⁸⁷

Media interest in the military is necessary and healthy. A free press is fundamental to the survival of democracy. "Autocratic and totalitarian states may have spectacular short term successes but they have a poor survival record compared with constitutions which permit the free expression of opinion. The relationship between the military and the media is a vital one. Both sides have much to learn about each other, and they are likely to suffer accordingly if they fail to do so."⁸⁸ Use of an assessment allows the military to support such a relationship, through objective evaluation of the best means to support the media, while ensuring the security of the operation.

The members of the military should view the media not as an enemy, but as an institution of vital importance to the American political culture. In turn, the media should view the military as dedicated men and women who are devoting their lives to service to their country. Reporters may have a legitimate reason for being in a given combat zone and for reporting as accurately and as quickly as is possible.⁸⁹ It is the military's responsibility to ensure this process operates smoothly, efficiently, and with regard for the operational considerations crucial for the safety and security of the force.

The military must continue to learn how to work with the media, and planning must reflect the fact that the media is assisting the military by telling their story to the American public. It is also important that not just the commanders and the public affairs officers understand this principle, but that all subordinates and staff officers both understand and accept it.⁹⁰ Military planners must continuously assess the impact of the media. Operations are continuous, and so too will be the media's presence and influence. This principle is ultimately the most significant reason for using a media assessment, and the importance of its use can and will be measured in the mutual benefit media coverage provides on the modern battlefield.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"It is true that at the end of the twentieth century the role of the media in military affairs cannot be treated any longer as a side issue, except by willful ignorance, and that in many cases involving Western forces the behavior of the media can help determine success or failure."⁹¹ The lessons of history and the environment of future battle require today's commanders and planners to accept the reality that the media can define success or failure to political leaders, the American people, and the world community alike. Thus, the time has come to consider media influence, and subsequent analysis of such influence, as vital a planning consideration as any single aspect of military execution. Nested with the tools outlined in Field Manual 100-6, Information Operations, media analysis and assessment can provide the necessary linkage between the media and the military, and promote symbiosis in what was once an environment of hostility and suspicion.

By applying resources to media analysis and assessment, the military planner can gain a better perspective on the implications of media coverage on military operations. Such an endeavor, although addressed by service war colleges in research programs and symposia on the subject of "the media and the military," has to this point been focused largely on the relationships between these institutions.⁹² The challenge today is to explore ways in which media coverage might be used to a planner's advantage in future military operations. It is now time for the military to view the media as an opportunity for advantage, rather than a necessary evil for commanders to deal with.

With media assessment, the military planner gains the advantage of prior knowledge of what is being broadcast as news. Through this knowledge, the

planner can be involved in placing the military in the best light. He knows what is being reported, what audience is receiving the information, and the ramifications for release of particular information. The planner thus comfortably assumes an active role in the military-media relationship, nurturing the relationship to sustain it, fully aware that both parties benefit from a cooperative engagement.

However, the planner must proceed understanding that there is currently no single accurate source, nor clear concurrence, for operational or even tactical level planners to seek in determining their needs and capabilities for military-media integration and engagement. What sources that do exist are vague or dated at best, and fail to integrate analysis of media integration within the framework of the mission analysis and orders process. Leaders may be forced to improvise a structure and format for such analysis, but must be cautious to avoid actions that invite discontinuity of effort and potential compromise of mission accomplishment.

Regardless of available authoritative sources on the subject of military-media engagement, the key to successful integration of the media into the operational arena rests first with planners embracing the view that the media is not a problem to be dealt with. Rather, the media is an essential element of the democratic process existing within the United States. The media must be carefully linked throughout all military echelons and integrated where operationally possible into the mission. Such an effort is certainly appropriate and deserving from a historical and utility perspective for consideration and implementation by planners and leaders.

With this in mind, the military community should consider the following recommendations:

- 1) Implement a media assessment at all levels of the military that recognizes the potential roles of the media, and incorporates the advances provided by the Information Operations environment.
- 2) Encourage teaching institutions to place more of a focus on instructing the historical examples of media influence in military operations (Desert Storm, Haiti, etc.). Emphasize the linkage between the media and the government, military, and people.
- 3) Continue to teach media integration in the institutions, and focus on such integration as an integral part of the mission analysis process.
- 4) Review the various tactical and joint publications with an eye toward defining the advantages and disadvantages of the media on the battlefield.
- 5) Assume a more open, accepting mindset toward media involvement in both garrison and on the battlefield. Simple measures such as invitations to the press to cover exercises, active use of soldier press releases, and candid discussion with media personnel can assist in creating a more suitable environment for mutual cooperation.
- 6) Develop a long term "partnership" strategy to build a lasting military-media relationship.

If military planners implemented these measures, media integration would become as vital a consideration in military operations as any single aspect of current warfare. The military can and must take the first step in advancing this concept, a concept that can have far-reaching benefits for an Army entering into the 21st Century. Military-media engagement thus becomes a partnership, one that serves not only the needs of the respective members, but the needs of the American society.

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